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ABSTRACT

The paper describes the 26-unit program called "Let's Be Social Home Program" intended to encourage parents to teach social skills to young handicapped children. The program was developed to supplement the "Let's Be Social" preschool program. The home program allows parents a choice in the amount and type of teaching activities they undertake by presenting three teaching options: home lessons (discussion of skills taught at school); coincidental teaching (helping children use a skill when naturally occurring opportunities arise); and home rehearsals (helping children practice a skill in a role-playing situation). Instructions for each activity are contained on one page and activities may take from 1 to 15 minutes. A 2-hour workshop gives parents the training needed to use the program. Two methods of encouraging and monitoring parental involvement have been evaluated. In the first system, a home training visit was followed by weekly telephone calls and parents returned a monthly form reporting on program use. In the second system, parents received one unit weekly along with a simple checklist to return. Parents in both systems rated the program as beneficial but parents using the unit-per-week system did more teaching. Sample activity sheets for developing sharing behaviors are appended. (DB)

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Involving Parents in Teaching Social Skills to Their Handicapped Preschoolers[1]

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This paper describes involvement of parents in a home program to teach social skills to young handicapped children. The program began with the development of a social skills program for use in mainstream preschools. Inclusion of social skills training in the preschool curriculum seemed desirable not only to help children learn adaptive interaction patterns at school, but also to help them learn skills to be used at home and in the community. Unfortunately, research on social skills training has indicated that it is difficult to obtain skill generalization from the training setting to other environments (Berler, Gross, & Drabman, 1982; Walker, McConnell, Walker, Clarke, Todis, Cohen, & Rankin, 1983).

In an effort to encourage skill generalization by teaching social skills in the home as well as at school, staff of the Social Integration Program developed a 26-unit program called Let's Be Social (Killoran, Rule, Stowitschek, Innocenti, & Striefel, 1982). Each unit addresses a skill such as sharing, greeting, helping, or taking turns. In the classroom, teachers devoted 15 to 20 minutes per day to social skill instruction. However, because families differ in the time and resources they can devote to instruction at home, the Let's Be Social Home Program (Innocenti, Rule, Killoran, Stowitschek, & Striefel, 1982) was structured to allow parents a choice of the amount and type of teaching activities to undertake. The program contains three teaching options for parents: (1) Home lessons--discussion of skills taught at school;

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(2) Coincidental teaching--helping children to use a skill (such as greeting or sharing) when naturally occurring opportunities arise at home or in the community; and (3) Home rehearsals--helping children to practice a skill in a role-playing situation with parents and/or siblings. A sample unit is included at the end of this paper.

The Let's Be Social Home Program is packaged for ease of use. Instructions for conducting each type of activity are contained on one page. Lessons are short. Home lessons and rehearsals may take 5 to 15 minutes and can be done at mealtime or whenever families are together. Coincidental teaching requires less than one minute. Parents simply observe to see whether a child applies a skill (such as saying hello) during naturally occurring opportunities (such as when a sibling arrives at home after school). If the child does not say hello, the parent prompts and praises the child for using the skill.

Parents are trained to use the program during a two-hour workshop. During the workshop, social skills are defined, teaching procedures are described, and parents practice recognizing social opportunities and teaching procedures using videotaped examples. Individual meetings are then held with each family (either during the workshop or when they deliver or pick up the child at school). Families decide what types of lessons they want to use and how often and sign an agreement to that effect.

Two different ways of encouraging and monitoring parental involvement have been evaluated. In the first system of maintaining parental involvement, a home training visit was conducted, followed by weekly telephone calls to families for purposes of monitoring and offering support. Parents received a new lesson each week and were asked to return a monthly form describing how they had used the program that month. In the second system, each week parents received one unit of the program along with a simple check sheet on which to record how they used the program. Included in the packet was a stamped, self-addressed envelope for

returning the weekly report to the program developers. No home visit was made.

Fourteen families participated in the home-visit-plus-phone-monitoring system. Six families participated in the unit-per-week system. Families participated for 13 to 17 weeks. All families had at least one handicapped child exhibiting a year or more delay in at least three developmental areas of functioning (such as speech and language, motor skills, or cognitive skills). Most children were moderately or mildly retarded. One child was diagnosed only as having behavior problems. All handicapped children were enrolled in a program providing special education services in a mainstream day care program.

Parents in both systems rated the program as beneficial to their children and siblings (when present). However, as shown in Table 1 below, parents using the unit-per-week system did more teaching, particularly in the area of coincidental teaching. They reported doing teaching both from the unit of the week and from previous units when opportunities arose. No attempt was made to assess the reliability of the reports.

Table 1. Parent-reported use of home program

Group	Home Lessons ($\bar{X}$ number per week)	Coincidental Teaching ($\bar{X}$ number per week)	Home Rehearsals ($\bar{X}$ number per week)
Visit and phone monitoring	1	8	2
Unit per week	3.1	9.1 (new unit) 10.5 (previous units)	3.5

A major concern of program developers was to develop a program that parents could easily use in the home. Many of the families participating in the program were single parent or two-working parent families. Therefore, it seemed desirable to design the home program to require relatively little time for families to use. It was encouraging to note that parents could do some lessons

each week and were able to find one or more opportunities each day to use coincidental teaching. One parent reported that coincidental teaching was "easy to implement, really takes no extra effort to perform once you are aware..." Coincidental teaching was the most frequently used type of teaching by both training groups.

Providing a program that can be used at home does not, of course, ensure that it will be used. While most parents offered the opportunity to participate in Let's Be Social in one program location did so (14 of 16 families during 1982-83 and 6 of 9 in 1984-85), when the program was offered in a more urban program, few parents attended the training.

Winton and Turnbull (1981) surveyed 31 parents of handicapped children enrolled in preschool programs. Although 84% thought it was desirable for parent training opportunities to be provided, only 13% chose parent training as their preferred mode of involvement; 65% reported that they would choose "informed contact with the teacher" (p. 17). Program personnel desiring to maximize opportunities to train parents may need to arrange the training when parents are already at school, perhaps when they pick up children. Alternatively, it may be desirable to explore delivering training in the home. Home training could be delivered directly, indirectly (perhaps through arrangement with local cable television channels), or through self-study (possibly through a loan of training videotapes and materials).

If parents can be conveniently trained, the experience the Let's Be Social program developers suggests that many will become involved in teaching their children at home. Their experience also suggests that the more parental involvement can center around naturally occurring events in the home, the greater parental participation may be.

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Social Integration Project

HOME SOCIAL OPPORTUNITY CARD

Home Activity Let's Share

Social Behaviors Sharing

Set up Opportunity	Prompt and Praise	Activity Criteria
When children are in yard, (or home) playing and they start fighting or arguing with each other over a toy.	Prompt: "(Name), WE CAN SHARE THE (name toy). FIRST YOU USE IT, THEN (other child's name) CAN USE IT." "(Name), THE NICE WAY TO PLAY WITH THE TOY IS BY SHARING IT. LET (other child) HAVE A TURN FOR A MINUTE AND THEN YOU CAN HAVE IT BACK. (Take toy for short time if necessary). "(Name), SHOW ME HOW WE CAN SHARE THE (toy). Praise: "I'M VERY HAPPY WHEN YOU BOYS (GIRLS) SHARE SO NICELY. "I LIKE THE WAY YOU BOYS (GIRLS) ACT GROWN-UP BY SHARING YOUR TOYS." "GOOD JOB SHARING YOUR TOYS SO NICELY."	Minimum: Optimal:

Set up Opportunity	Prompt and Praise	Activity Criteria

HOME SOCIAL OPPORTUNITY CARD

Home Activity: Let's Share

Social Behaviors: Sharing

Set up Opportunity	Prompt and Praise	Activity Criteria
In the morning or at bed	Prompt: "(Name), PASS THE TOOTHPASTE TO (name)	Minimum:
time have the children share	AND SHARE IT WITH HER."	
toothpaste, soap or pass	"(Name), PASS ME THE TOWEL SO I CAN SHARE	
towels to one another (if	IT WITH (name)."	
children use bathroom at the	"CAN YOU SHARE THE SOAP WITH ME?"	
same time).	Praise: I LIKE IT WHEN YOU SHARE SO NICELY.	Optimal:
	YOU KIDS SHARE SO NICELY." "I'M HAPPY WHEN	
	YOU SHARE TOGETHER." "THANKS FOR SHARING	
	THE (soap, toothpaste, towel)."	

Home Activity _____

Social Behaviors _____

Set up Opportunity	Prompt and Praise	Activity Criteria

HOME SOCIAL OPPORTUNITY CARD - INCIDENTAL TEACHING

Home Activity Let's Share

Social Behaviors Sharing

Set up Opportunity	Prompt and Praise	Activity Criteria
Children are in play area	Prompt: (Name) "LET (other child) HAVE	Minimum:
together. Have them practice	THE BALL NOW."	1 per day
sharing toys. Be sure that	"(NAME), TAKE TURNS WITH (other child) ON	
the child who gives up a toy	THE SWING (slide etc.)	
gets it back after awhile.	"(NAME), YOU CAN LET (name) PLAY WITH THE	
	TRUCK (doll).	Optimal:
	Praise: "I LIKE THE WAY YOU'RE SHARING THE	
	(name toy). "THE WAY YOU TWO ARE SHARING	
	SURE MAKES ME PROUD."	
	"IT'S HARD TO LET SOMEBODY ELSE HAVE THE	
	TOY YOU WANT, BUT YOU SHARED. THAT IS	
	REALLY GROWN-UP.	

Home Activity Let's Share

Social Behaviors Sharing

Set up Opportunity	Prompt and Praise	Activity Criteria
At meal time, serve the food	Prompt: "(Name) TAKE SOME (name food) AND	1 per day
on platters or in a bowl(s)	PASS IT TO (ME, or say name of person next	
so everybody takes some (but	to them). If child takes too much, "WE	
not too much) and passes the	HAVE TO BE SURE EVERYBODY GETS SOME. YOU	
food.	NEED TO PUT SOME BACK or (Name) WOULD YOU	
	SHARE THE (name food) WITH ME?"	
	Praise: THAT'S GOOD SHARING! or GREAT!	
	YOU TOOK SOME AND PASSED IT ON."	

Social Integration Project
Home Rehearsal

Unit 3 LET'S SHARE

Activities	Teacher Says/Does	Child Response
Play with the child or watch them play with friends or brothers and sisters. Give them toys that can be shared - blocks, or crayons, or cars and trucks, or toy animals, or paints. Don't use a child's favorite toy. Favorite toys are hard to share.	1. "LET'S PRACTICE SHARING. WE'LL PLAY WITH THE (name toy). YOU GET SOME AND I (or say name of friend, brother or sister) GET SOME. THAT'S SHARING. Praise good sharing. Have one child to ask other to give them a toy and praise the child for giving it. Prompt if necessary.	Take some toys, but not all. Give other child (or parent) the toy he or he is playing with for a short time.
Prompt by having one child ask another to share (a blue crayon or a certain truck). If child refuses, take the toy, give it to the other child for a short time. (about a minute) and then give it back. Say "SEE, YOU SHARE WITH (name) AND SHE or he) WILL SHARE WITH YOU. After another minute ask child to share that toy with you. Praise them for doing it. Praise good sharing. "I LIKE THE WAY YOU ARE USING THE CRAYONG TOGETHER." "IT WAS GOOD SHARING TO GIVE (name) THE (doll, truch, crayon).	2. "HERE'S ANOTHER WAY TO SHARE. WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH (name toy) FOR EVERYBODY TO HAVE ONE, SO FIRST YOU (one child) USE IT AND THEN YOU (other child) GET TO USE IT. Prompt children to share (trade toys) after a short time. Praise good sharing.	

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Social Integration Project
Home Lesson
Unit 3 LET'S SHARE

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Activities	Teacher Says/Does	Child Response
Ask child and other family members what sharing means. Praise child for good answers. If child gives a silly answer, ask another child or give an example of sharing. Then ask the child again (unless he or she is giggling or not paying attention). If a child gives no answer or a wrong answer, tell them a better answer or ask another family member to give an answer. Then ask the child to repeat the better answer. (This is prompting.) Praise the child for repeating the answer. Ways to praise: "THAT WAS GOOD THINKING." "THAT WOULD BE A NICE WAY TO SHARE." "THAT'S RIGHT. SHARING COULD BE (repeat the answer)."	(Child's name) I HEAR YOU HAVE BEEN LEARNING TO SHARE AT SCHOOL. TELL ME A WAY TO SHARE. Praise answers. they don't have to be the ones listed. Prompt if necessary.	Possible answers: "SHARING IS GIVING SOMEONE PART OF YOUR COOKIE." "IF YOU BOTH GET BLOCKS FROM THE SAME PILE TO BUILD SOMETHING, THAT'S SHARING." "SHARING IS PLYAING WITH THEY SAME TOY (OR LOOKING AT THE SAME BOOK)."
	"WHAT ARE SOME WAYS WE SHARE AT HOME?"	Possible answers: "WE ALL TAKE A PIECE OF THE (cake, pie, chicken, bread). "I LET MY BROTHER (SISTER) USE MY (name a toy, like bike)." "WE TAKE TURNS WITH THE (swing, red crayon, or whatever)."
	"WHY SHOULD WE SHARE?"	Possibe answers: "IT'S FAIR. EVERYBODY GETS SOME IF YOU SHARE. "PEOPLE LIKE IT WHEN YOU SHARE." "PEOPLE WILL SHARE BACK." "IT MAKES PEOPLE HAPPY WHEN YOU SHARE."